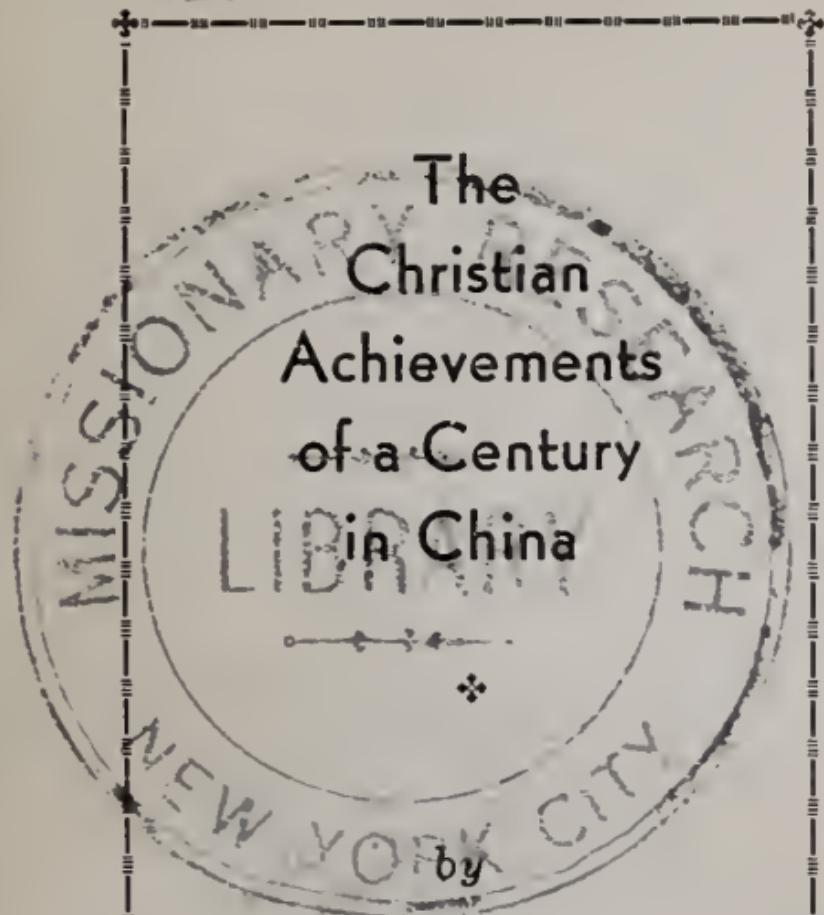


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P. H. Anderson, D. D.

Missionary to China



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DEDICATED
*To the Memory of Our
Pioneer Baptist Missionaries
to China,
Rev. and Mrs. John Lewis Shuck*

When Rev. and Mrs. J. L. Shuck arrived in South China a century ago, they found little to encourage them, aside from the promises of God. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, had preceded them by twenty-nine years. During those intervening years other Christian groups had become interested in China, sending out a number of missionaries; but so far as the eye could see, very little had actually been accomplished. When Mr. and Mrs. Shuck arrived there in 1836, there were not a dozen Christians in the whole of China proper. One piece of constructive work had been done, however. The Bible had been translated into the classical language of China, and an edition had been printed. This was foundational work, making much lighter the burdens of our own missionaries, aside from this Mr. and Mrs. Shuck faced a discouraging outlook.

They faced a nation which was hostile to everything foreign. Foreign merchants, in their pursuit of selfish gain, had gone to China in advance of the missionaries. Those merchants were followed closely, and protected by foreign soldiers. As might have

been expected, this combination led to wars between Chinese and Foreigners on Chinese soil. When the missionaries arrived later, they found the Chinese people already hostile to foreigners. As the Chinese saw it, nothing good could come from abroad. Every foreigner was looked upon as a devil, and as such was hated and feared. Against this opposition of hatred and prejudice, the missionaries entered upon their mission of love in the name of Christ. How unfortunate that Christians permitted gold hunters and armed soldiers to go ahead of them.

They faced a nation which was in intense spiritual darkness. The Chinese people, with all of their potential greatness, were strangers to the true and living God. The dumb idols and dead ancestors which they worshipped could do nothing for them. They were in as dense spiritual darkness as that which Paul found on Mars Hill. The missionaries found the Chinese an intensely religiously inclined people, but a people groping in spiritual darkness. Such darkness is difficult to penetrate. It has been one of the most terrific barriers in the way of the progress of our spiritual religion. Jesus real-

ized this when he came to be the light of the world, and when he commanded his disciples, "Let your light shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may be constrained to glorify God."

They faced the most difficult language that foreigners have ever been called upon to learn. Some unusual force must have struck the people at the destruction of the Tower of Bable, to send a group of them off speaking the Chinese language. Some Christians in America, after hearing missionaries sing in Chinese, said: "It is no wonder the heathen rage, if missionaries sing like that." Paul did not have to face any such difficulty. Had not the voice from Macedonia turned Paul west, and if he had ultimately gotten to China, he would have experienced a shocking pause in his progress. Certainly his sermons would never have gotten into the Biblical records. The Chinese language has had to be learned by the missionaries. Not only so; but much creative work has had to be done on that language, before it could give adequate expression to the great spiritual truths of our religion. This language has been a difficulty of the first magnitude.

Again those pioneer missionaries had to live under conditions which were trying in the extreme. They were forced to accept such quarters as they could get, which were, as a rule, far inferior to quarters occupied by the better classes of Chinese. Inexperienced in life in the East, with no protection from contagious diseases, the missionaries naturally fared badly. Is it any wonder that the beautiful and cultured Henrietta Hall Shuck, after only a few years of service, fell out of the line? Others of our missionaries broke under the strain, even before the work was well begun. We missionaries of today, accustomed to the comforts attending our civilization, could not endure what those pioneer missionaries to China endured, and which they seemed to endure with joy, as seeing him who was invisible.

They faced the necessity for faith and patience. It is one thing to sow the seed of the gospel, and at the same time to be reaping a harvest from earlier sowings. It is quite a different thing to go into an entirely new field, prepare the soil, sow the seed, cultivate it, get one's self acquainted with new and trying conditions, and wait for the

harvest. Morrison waited seven years for his first convert. Mr. and Mrs. Shuck were in South China six years before they could do any really constructive missionary work. But "Going forth with weeping, bearing precious seed," they waited in faith for the harvest. God gave faith to those pioneers, and God taught them patience. Both of these graces were necessary for the future progress of the cause of Christ in China.

In the above we have noticed a few of the difficulties faced by our pioneer missionaries. There were many others. The critics of missions who charge that too little has been accomplished for the money and man-power expended, would do well to study these difficulties. Those of us who have made this study at first hand are rejoicing today, and thanking God, because of the achievements of a century. In spite of difficulties, or, rather triumphing over difficulties, much has been accomplished; while the foundation has been put down, in mortar mixed with blood, for a great Christian structure in China. We will do well to consider the definite achievements of the past century.

I. The Gospel Has Been Widely Proclaimed In China

A decade ago I heard Rev. Yeung Hoi Fung, a wise and responsible Baptist leader in South China, preach a remarkable Christmas sermon. Taking as his text the words, "A Name That Is Above Every Name," he began his sermon thus: "The name that is most familiarly known in China today is the name of Jesus." Seeing a look of surprise on many faces, Mr. Yeung added: "Some of you are surprised at this statement, but it is true. You have perhaps supposed that the name most familiarly known among the Chinese was that of Confucius; but the name of Jesus has gone much further among the multiplied millions of our people than that of China's greatest sage." In further explanation he said that missionaries, Chinese preachers, bible women, and many other Christians had gone throughout the length and breadth of China proclaiming redemption in the name of Jesus; that the Bible, and Christian literature in other forms, had been widely distributed in every part of the country; and that the persecution which missionaries and Chinese Christians had suffered

in the name of Christ had but emphasized in the minds of the Chinese people the very name of Jesus. So in China the “Name that is above every name” is the name of Jesus.

This fact has become increasingly recognized during the past decade. Following the political disturbances which began in China in 1925, many critics of missions predicted the end of the Christian movement in China. They spoke freely of the “Twilight of Missions,” declaring with great boldness that Christianity’s influence in China was dead. But it is not dead. That political disturbance, so hostile to our religion, served two providential purposes. Many who had confessed Christ, but who were really untrue, left the churches. Again, persecution aimed directly at the Christian religion, was used of God to advertise among the Chinese people the name of Jesus and the teachings of the gospel. It is remarkable how passing through the fire purifies the churches of Christ, and brings a renewing of divine power into the lives of the Lord’s servants. China has been literally sowed down with the gospel of Christ. In a country so great and populous, this is a

worthy achievement, even for a century.

II. Idolatry And Ancestor Worship Have Been Shaken To Their Foundation In China.

Church historians tell us that during the two or three centuries preceding the coming of Christ, the power of idolatry was shaken throughout the Roman Empire through the teachings of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others. These great philosophers literally ridiculed idolatry out of court. This fact is prominently mentioned as one of the world movements providentially used in preparing the world for the coming of Christ. Likewise in China the preaching of the gospel has undermined these idolatrous practices.

I would not have you believe for a moment that there are no idol or ancestor worshippers in China today. There are millions of them, even as there were in the Roman Empire at the beginning of the Christian era. But these evil practices have been exposed to the light, and the great strategic battle for their destruction has been fought. Idolatry and ancestor worship can no longer be defended by thinking Chinese. And we confidently await the day when every

idol temple in China will crumble, and when the worshipping hearts of the Chinese people will be lifted from things that are dead to the giver of eternal life.

In this achievement the Christian forces have not ridiculed idols and dead ancestors out of court. The fallacies of these idolatrous practices have been exposed, as the living Christ—who went down into death and came out again—has been presented. The philosophers of the past could ridicule idolatry out of court, but they could offer to men no substitute as a more sure foundation. Thank God we have been able to offer to the Chinese “A more excellent way.” Life is taking the place of death. A sure foundation is supplanting that of wood, hay, and stubble. This is another achievement of the past century, and one for which millions of Chinese will rise up to call us blessed.

III. The Cause Of Christ Is Today An Established Fact In China

Those who have fought the battles for Christ in China have not been experimenters. Jesus was not an experimenter. As he faced the task of saving the world, he knew exactly what had to be done, and how it had to be done. And so the

Book tells us, "He set his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem." Those who have served in China under the banner of Christ, went forth with the positive conviction in their souls that their Lord was the answer to China's every need. They went forth under orders from him. They went forth in faith, assured that the seed of the gospel sown in Chinese hearts, and nurtured under divine grace, would yield a harvest for the Lord. To them it was just a simple matter of giving a faithful testimony for Christ, of living that testimony before the eyes of men, and of looking to the Lord for the increase.

The results have been exactly according to the promises. Jesus has become a living reality to hundreds of thousands of Christian Chinese. In them, and in their faith, the cause of Christ has become established in China. Nor is this all. The principles of the gospel have entered into the very warp and woof of the thinking of the Chinese nation. In places high and low these Christian precepts are recognized, so that the very destiny of the nation is being influenced by them. It is not an accident that Christians in China, out of all proportion to their numbers,

are occupying positions of responsibility in every phase of the nation's life. The cause of Christ has passed the initial stages in China. It is entrenched, and is the most dynamic force that stirs today among the Chinese people.

In other words, Christ has again verified his promises. In his resurrection commission, with all power in heaven and on earth in his hands, he said to his disciples: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations . . . and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." As we think of the place and importance of the cause of Christ in China now, looking at it from the viewpoint of the achievements of a century, we remember that the Lord has been true to his promises, and we take courage. In the face of victories already won, we ought to trust our Lord, never wavering.

IV. Individual Chinese Christians Have Demonstrated The Marvels Of Divine Grace.

During this century God has worked marvels of grace in the hearts and lives of many individual Chinese. It has meant much to the Christians of all the centuries that Saul, of Tarsus, a Pharisee of the

Pharisees, was so changed under the power of God that he became the greatest apostle of all time to the Gentile world. To many of us it is more marvelous still that this same Lord, without any Damascus road miracle, has saved and transformed Chinese whose ancestors, for generations without number, had been idolatrous worshippers. Missionaries from every section of China can bear their testimony to the Lord's victories in the lives of individual Chinese.

A generation ago Mr. Chan Mung Nam, a Baptist layman, in Canton, was called to his heavenly reward. For many years he was associated with Dr. Graves in translation work and Bible teaching. He had inherited a strong mind, and was transformed from within by the power of the divine Spirit. He walked with God, and God used him. Fifty-three years ago, when there were but two Baptist churches in South China, with not more than two hundred members, Mr. Chan, in co-operation with Pastor Fung Woot Chuen, led a small group of Baptists in the first effort known among Chinese Christians to make our religion indigenous in China. From that bold move, based upon faith in Christ,

the Baptists in South China have been inspired, in victory and defeat, to put the Lord's cause among them upon a self-supporting and self-directing basis. This same Mr. Chan, child of God and spiritual leader, wrote one tract, called, "Truth Manifested," which is known to have been used of the Lord in leading more than three hundred Chinese men to Christ. We rejoice at every mention of the name of Chan Mung Nam. But we rejoice more because of the power of divine grace made manifest in the heart and life of this great lay-servant of the Lord.

Seven years ago another faithful servant of the Lord in Canton entered upon his heavenly reward, Rev. Yeung Hoi Fung. I was intimately associated with Mr. Yeung in the glad service of the Lord for twenty-one years; and I bear my testimony to the power of God's grace in his life. Before becoming a Christian Mr. Yeung sold his first child—a daughter—into slavery. After becoming a Christian one of his first acts was to redeem that daughter from slavery. For more than the lifetime of a generation Mr. Yeung served his Lord. As preacher and pastor, as writer and translator, as a

teacher of Old Testament in the Graves Theological Seminary, as a wise counsellor in all kingdom affairs, as a meek and humble follower of Christ, he was a living demonstration of the saving grace of God in human life. Late one evening, in the spring of 1929, without warning, he fell on sleep. His Chinese brethren were reminded of the Bible testimony concerning Enoch, who "Walked with God, and was not, for God took him." When I returned to China a year later, I missed Mr. Yeung almost as if he had been my own father. He was God's man, through whom God worked to accomplish his own will.

I could go on almost indefinitely, testifying to the power of God's grace in redeeming, transforming, and using individual Chinese. Those who know how to place the proper value upon life will think of this as one of the greatest achievements of the century.

V. Baptists Have Been In The Forefront Of This Victorious Christian March

It would be an injustice, and this statement would be far from complete, should I fail to mention the responsibility which our Baptist people have borne in connection

with gospel triumphs in China during the century. It is my deliberate judgement that Baptists have been a mighty factor in these triumphs. The simplicity of our message; our faithfulness to the word of God; our spiritual interpretation of its truths; the democracy of our church life; our emphasis upon Christian experience; our demand for spiritual freedom and responsibility; these simple, but profound Baptist principles, so true to the New Testament, have had an unparalleled appeal in China.

When Dr. Mott held his missionary conferences in China in 1913, he was much impressed with the influence of Baptists. On his return to America he said that he knew nothing in modern missionary history which was comparable to Baptist opportunity in China. We have heard the story of an Episcopal missionary, who, on his return to this country, was asked by his Board to explain this Baptist influence. He explained it on the basis of the simplicity of the Chinese mind. He admitted that when Chinese were first converted, the simplicity of Baptist church life appealed to them. He encouraged his Board, however, with the

assurance that after being educated, their converts learned to appreciate the more intricate life of the Episcopal Church. Perhaps he was right. Baptists have always been a simple minded people, and China has been a great field for us.

As a matter of fact, Christian history in China has demonstrated that Baptists are right. Baptist Chinese, as a group, give more money, exercise more initiative, bear more responsibility, and find more joy in Christian service, than any other group of Christians in that land. Representatives from among Southern Baptists who have recently visited China, say that the half was not told them. Since returning to America these representatives have thrilled our home people as they have told of Baptist triumphs among the Chinese. Would that more Southern Baptists could go and see for themselves.

During the century Baptists have preached much gospel in China; they have printed and distributed great volumes of Christian literature; they have trained many hundreds of preachers for the work of the gospel ministry; they have healed the sick by the hundreds of thousands; they have

educated a proportionate part of each rising generation of their constituency; they have lived for Christ before the eyes of their fellow men; they have established churches for fellowship, for spiritual growth, and as evangelizing agencies among the masses; and they have learned to co-operate in the larger program of kingdom service. The Lord is working mightily in China through Baptists. "Let us press on."

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